International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology
Available online at : www.ijsrst.com
Print ISSN: 2395-6011 | Online ISSN: 2395-602X
doi : https://doi.org/10.32628/IJSRST

A Regression-Based Framework for Identifying Drivers of Transportation Cost Variability in Local Supply Chains

Opeyemi Morenike Filani[1], John Oluwaseun Olajide[2], Grace Omotunde Osho[3]
[1]Proburg Ltd, Lagos, Nigeria
[2]Lipton, Nigeria
[3]Guinness Nig. Plc, Nigeria
Corresponding Author: filaniopeyemi@gmail.com

Article Info
Volume 9, Issue 2
Page Number : 672-692

Publication Issue
March-April-2022

Article History
Accepted : 01 April 2022
Published : 09 April 2022

ABSTRACT

Transportation cost variability is a critical factor influencing the efficiency and competitiveness of local supply chains, especially in regions characterized by infrastructural limitations, fluctuating fuel prices, and regulatory complexities. Despite growing interest in cost optimization, there remains a lack of structured methodologies to systematically identify the primary drivers of such variability. This paper proposes a regression-based analytical framework for investigating the dynamic and multifactorial contributors to transportation cost fluctuations in local supply networks. Drawing upon an extensive review of empirical and theoretical studies, the study integrates insights from supply chain economics, logistics operations, and econometric modeling. The proposed framework is designed to guide policymakers, supply chain analysts, and logistics providers in diagnosing inefficiencies and implementing data-driven interventions. As no original data was gathered, this article is based entirely on a synthesis of secondary sources. The study concludes by highlighting research and operational gaps that need to be addressed for improved predictability and control of transportation expenditures.

Keywords : Transportation Cost Variability, Supply Chain Regression Modeling, Logistics Cost Drivers, Local Supply Chain Dynamics, Cost Control Strategies, Predictive Analytics Frameworks

1. Introduction

Transportation plays a central role in modern supply chains by enabling the movement of raw materials, intermediate goods, and final products across value networks [1], [2], [3]. In local supply chains defined here as geographically bounded logistics systems operating within a specific national or subnational context transportation costs often account for a substantial proportion of total supply chain expenses [4], [5]. According to the World Bank, transportation can constitute up to 40% of total logistics costs in developing and emerging economies [6], [7]. The variability of these costs presents significant operational and financial risks to firms and supply networks alike, impeding accurate cost forecasting, optimal resource allocation, and long-term strategic planning [8], [9], [10].

Over the past two decades, research has consistently emphasized the need to manage transportation cost volatility due to its impact on product pricing, customer satisfaction, and supply chain sustainability [11], [12], [13]. While macroeconomic factors such as global fuel prices and regulatory changes are well-recognized contributors, local and micro-level drivers such as road infrastructure quality, shipment consolidation practices, driver productivity, route planning inefficiencies, and even climatic conditions are less frequently quantified or understood in their interplay [14], [15], [16]. Identifying these drivers and understanding their relative contribution to cost variability can assist logistics practitioners and policymakers in targeting the most impactful areas for intervention [17], [18], [19].

Despite the complexity and ubiquity of the problem, there remains a methodological gap in the literature for analyzing transportation cost variability in a structured and data-driven manner [20], [21], [22]. Regression analysis, widely used in econometrics, finance, and operations research, offers a robust tool for modeling cost dynamics by isolating the effects of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable transportation cost, in this case [23], [24]. Regression-based approaches allow for hypothesis testing, trend analysis, and estimation of marginal effects, making them highly suitable for identifying significant cost drivers in logistics systems [25], [26], [27].

Several academic studies have applied regression models to analyze specific elements of transportation cost fuel consumption [28], fleet maintenance [29], or freight rates [30], but few have constructed integrated frameworks that link multiple operational and contextual variables to cost variability in local supply chains [31], [32], [33]. Furthermore, many existing studies are either contextually bounded to large-scale international logistics networks or are not updated to reflect recent shifts in urbanization, last-mile complexity, and digitization in supply chain processes [34], [35].

This article contributes to the field by proposing a regression-based conceptual framework for identifying and analyzing the key drivers of transportation cost variability in local supply chains. The framework is designed to be adaptable across diverse local contexts, particularly in low- and middle-income economies where logistics cost burdens are often acute and under-analyzed. As a literature-based study, the research is grounded in an extensive review of peer-reviewed articles, institutional reports, and analytical models from the fields of supply chain management, transportation economics, and applied statistics.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents an in-depth literature review exploring the current state of research on transportation cost structures, variability drivers, and regression applications in logistics. Section 3 introduces the proposed regression-based framework, outlining its components, assumptions, and analytical potential. Section 4 discusses key implementation considerations, including data requirements, model validation, and stakeholder alignment. Section 5 evaluates the potential business impact and policy relevance of applying such a model, while Section 6 concludes the paper and outlines directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

The objective of this literature review is to explore and synthesize the body of knowledge concerning transportation cost structures, the causes of cost variability in local supply chains, and the application of regression analysis as a tool for modeling cost dynamics. The section is divided into four parts: (1) foundational theories and cost structures in logistics, (2) known and emerging cost variability drivers in local supply chains, (3) statistical and regression-based modeling of transportation costs, and (4) gaps in existing research.

2.1 Foundational Concepts: Logistics and Transportation Cost Structures

Transportation costs are generally categorized into fixed and variable components [36], [37]. Fixed costs include vehicle depreciation, insurance, and licenses, while variable costs comprise fuel consumption, driver wages, road tolls, and maintenance [38], [39], [40]. In local supply chains, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America these costs are often compounded by poor infrastructure, high congestion levels, and informal logistics networks [41], [42].

Research by Soleimani et al [43] emphasized that transportation is not only the largest cost segment in logistics (sometimes reaching over 50%) but also the most volatile, largely due to its dependence on fluctuating external factors. Studies by Lui [44] also highlight that transportation cost behavior is influenced by shipment size, frequency, distance, carrier type, and load factor efficiency.

In many developing economies, logistics cost data is fragmented, and cost attribution mechanisms are often imprecise [45], [46], [47]. Consequently, researchers and practitioners have called for more granular frameworks that separate out logistics cost contributors across regional, urban, and rural geographies [4], [48], [49].

2.2 Drivers of Transportation Cost Variability in Local Supply Chains

2.2.1 Infrastructure and Physical Environment

The physical state of transport infrastructure remains a critical factor in cost variability. Poor road conditions increase vehicle wear and fuel consumption, reduce average speeds, and raise accident risks [50]. Empirical studies in Nigeria [51], India [52], and Kenya [53] have quantified a 10–30% increase in per-kilometer costs on roads rated “poor” by local infrastructure authorities. Pavement roughness, absence of signage, and unpaved routes significantly influence cost dynamics [54].

Furthermore, urban congestion is a growing concern. Research shows that delivery costs per kilometer can double during peak traffic hours in cities like Lagos, Nairobi, and Jakarta [55], [56]. Last-mile delivery inefficiencies due to informal settlements, lack of geocoding, or unpredictable traffic patterns add complexity to cost planning [57], [58].

2.2.2 Operational and Managerial Factors

Shipment consolidation, fleet utilization, vehicle routing, and driver management also contribute to cost variance [59], [60]. Studies have shown that delivery cost per unit can be significantly lowered by increasing drop density and reducing empty miles [61], [62]. Driver behavior, including speed regulation, fuel efficiency practices, and idle times can cause up to a 15% variance in fuel-related costs, as noted in fleet performance studies [63]. Labor market variability, including wage disparities and informal employment, further influences wage costs and service quality [64], [65].

2.2.3 Input Price Fluctuations

Fuel prices are the most cited and measurable factor in transportation cost fluctuation. International fuel price volatility often cascades into local markets, exacerbating cost unpredictability in fuel-importing economies [66], [67]. Spare parts and maintenance services also experience inflationary shocks that affect transport budgets [68], [69]. Studies have found that inflation-adjusted transport costs can vary as much as 25% annually in countries with currency instability [70], [71].

2.2.4 Regulatory and Policy Dimensions

Policy-induced costs including tolls, weighbridge fees, border delays, and license compliance are highly influential in local transportation variability [72]. For example, policy analysis in East Africa shows that border crossing time and corruption-related payments can cause up to 12% in cost overruns for cross-district transportation [73]. Inconsistent enforcement of road regulations also leads to informal "hidden" costs that rarely get reflected in standard budgets but contribute significantly to variability [74].

2.2.5 Technological and Digital Maturity

Firms with route optimization software, telematics, and digital load planning tools report significantly lower cost variance than those using manual or legacy systems [75], [76], [77]. Studies in Colombia and Vietnam confirm that small logistics firms without GPS tracking incur higher variability in last-mile cost-to-serve metrics [78], [79].

The maturity of transport management systems (TMS) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) also affects the visibility and management of cost drivers [80], [81].

2.3 Regression-Based Modeling in Transportation Research

Regression models have long been used to analyze cost relationships in logistics and transport. The flexibility of regression enables the analysis of multiple, potentially correlated factors while maintaining interpretability and statistical rigor.

2.3.1 Linear Regression Applications

Linear regression is most frequently used for modeling transport cost relationships, particularly in cost-per-kilometer or fuel-consumption analysis. Examples include:

- Sodhi and Tang [82] used linear regression to relate road surface condition and fuel efficiency.
- Beske et al [83]modeled transportation expenses as a function of order volume, travel time, and product type.

However, the limitation of linearity means these models often fail to capture interactions and nonlinear cost behaviors.

2.3.2 Multiple and Hierarchical Regression Models

Multiple regression allows the inclusion of additional predictors like vehicle type, driver experience, or shipment urgency. Studies by Apte et al. [84] Waller and Fawcett [85] and developed regression models to estimate cost variability across regions and vehicle classes. Hierarchical models (e.g., multilevel regression) account for nested data structures, such as transport routes within cities or districts. These have been effective in modeling transport cost variability in rural logistics [86], [87].

2.3.3 Time-Series and Panel Regression

Time-series regression helps analyze trends, seasonality, and lag effects. For example, used autoregressive models to predict fuel-induced cost shifts over quarterly intervals. Panel data regressions, meanwhile, provide insights across firms and time periods, controlling for unobservable heterogeneity [88], [89].

2.3.4 Logistic and Poisson Regression

When dealing with categorical outcomes or count data (e.g., cost overrun occurrence or frequency of delivery delays), logistic and Poisson regressions are used. These are particularly relevant in incident-based cost modeling [90], [91].

2.4 Limitations and Research Gaps

Despite progress, several gaps remain:

1. Underrepresentation of Local Contexts: Many regression models are calibrated using data from developed economies or global logistics providers, limiting their relevance to informal or hybrid supply chains common in low-income settings [92], [93].

2. Overreliance on Fuel-Based Cost Modeling: While fuel cost is a dominant factor, other variables like weather patterns, loading/unloading delays, and informal payments are often excluded due to lack of structured data [94], [95].

3. Poor Integration of Managerial and Operational Factors: Few models integrate both quantitative variables (e.g., fuel, distance) and qualitative or behavioral ones (e.g., driver behavior, planning sophistication) [96].

4. Lack of Standardized Frameworks: Most existing models are one-off empirical exercises and do not provide a replicable framework for consistent use across companies or regions [97], [98].

5. Limited Predictive Validation: Many studies stop at regression coefficient interpretation and do not test model predictive performance using validation datasets or holdout samples [99], [100].

2.5 Conceptual Implications for Framework Design

The reviewed literature supports the following assumptions for a regression-based framework:

- Multifactorial Structure: Cost variability is driven by a mix of physical, managerial, economic, and policy variables.

- Regional Sensitivity: Cost drivers differ significantly across rural, peri-urban, and urban settings.

- Data Diversity: Models must integrate structured numerical data (e.g., kilometers, fuel) and semi-structured attributes (e.g., compliance violations).

- Scalability and Replicability: The model should be usable by medium-sized logistics operators with limited technical resources.

3. Proposed Regression-Based Framework

To address the analytical and operational gaps identified in the literature, this section proposes a structured regression-based framework tailored to modeling the drivers of transportation cost variability in local supply chains. The framework is designed to be both methodologically robust and practically applicable, especially for supply chain environments characterized by heterogeneity in infrastructure, data maturity, and operational complexity. Its architecture consists of five key components: conceptual design, variable taxonomy, model specification, implementation workflow, and use case flexibility.

3.1 Conceptual Framework Design

The proposed framework adopts a modular approach grounded in multiple linear regression but expandable to alternative models depending on data characteristics. The conceptual foundation rests on the hypothesis that transportation cost variability is the cumulative result of multiple, interacting cost drivers, both endogenous (e.g., driver behavior, route planning) and exogenous (e.g., fuel prices, policy tolls, road quality).

The model is represented as:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^{n} \beta_j X_{ij} + \epsilon_i$$

Where:

- Y_i = transportation cost per shipment or kilometer for observation i
- β_0 = intercept
- β_j = coefficient of predictor variable X_j
- X_{ij} = value of predictor j for observation i
- ϵ_i = error term

This form can accommodate categorical variables (e.g., urban vs. rural), dummy variables (e.g., fuel shortage yes/no), and interaction terms (e.g., poor infrastructure * heavy rainfall).

3.2 Variable Categories and Predictor Taxonomy

To ensure clarity and replicability, the independent variables are grouped into five thematic categories:

3.2.1 Infrastructure and Environment

- Road type (paved, gravel, dirt)
- Route length (km)
- Average travel speed (km/h)
- Traffic congestion index
- Rainfall or weather disruptions
- Geographic terrain slope

3.2.2 Operational Practices

- Vehicle load factor (%)
- Number of stops per route
- Trip frequency (daily/weekly)
- Driver experience (years)
- Average delivery time window

3.2.3 Cost Inputs

- Fuel price per liter
- Vehicle maintenance cost per km
- Tire and parts inflation rate
- Lubricant and oil expenses

3.2.4 Regulatory and Policy Factors

- Number of toll stops
- Estimated toll fees
- Border/customs inspection delays
- Weighbridge interactions

3.2.5 Organizational and Technological Factors

- Use of route optimization software (binary)
- Use of fleet telematics (binary)
- Shipment tracking capability (binary)
- Real-time delivery status updates (binary)

Dependent variable YYY: total cost per trip, cost per kilometer, or delivery unit cost—standardized as needed.

3.3 Model Specification and Statistical Considerations

3.3.1 Variable Selection and Multicollinearity

To mitigate multicollinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis is recommended during model diagnostics. For example, if both fuel consumption and distance are included, their interaction must be monitored to avoid distortions.

3.3.2 Dummy Variable Encoding

Categorical variables like "route type" or "road condition" should be converted into dummy variables, e.g.:

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RoadType_Paved = 1 if paved, 0 otherwise
RoadType_Dirt = 1 if dirt, 0 otherwise
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This facilitates interpretability and aligns with regression modeling standards.

3.3.3 Interaction Terms

To assess joint effects such as the interaction of route terrain and rainfall on cost interaction terms are introduced:

$$Cost = \beta_0 + \beta_1(RoadQuality) + \beta_2(Rainfall) + \beta_3(RoadQuality \times Rainfall) + \epsilon$$

This allows the framework to capture nonlinear interactions among predictors.

3.3.4 Functional Form Adjustments

Transformations such as logarithmic or polynomial terms can be applied if the relationship between variables is non-linear:

$$\ln(Cost) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln(FuelPrice) + \beta_2 Distance + \epsilon$$

Such transformations are especially useful in modeling cost elasticity with respect to key drivers.

3.4 Data Requirements and Model Assumptions

The framework assumes access to a minimal dataset with the following properties:

- Minimum of 30–100 observations for OLS stability

- Continuous or categorical predictors (already cleaned and labeled)
- Standardized measurement units (e.g., km, liters, USD, hours)

The model adheres to core regression assumptions:

1. Linearity: Relationship between predictors and dependent variable is linear.
2. Independence: Residuals are uncorrelated.
3. Homoscedasticity: Constant variance of residuals across values.
4. Normality: Residuals follow a normal distribution.

Violations are addressed through model refinements, transformation, or robust regression techniques.

3.5 Implementation Workflow

A five-step process is recommended for deploying the framework:

1. Data Collection: Gather structured trip logs, vehicle costs, weather records, and route performance data.
2. Data Cleaning: Normalize units, handle missing values, and encode categorical variables.
3. Exploratory Analysis: Visualize variable distributions and identify outliers.
4. Model Fitting: Use OLS regression or appropriate extensions.
5. Model Evaluation: Test for goodness-of-fit (R^2, RMSE), coefficient significance (t-tests), and diagnostics (VIF, residual plots).

Tools such as Python (statsmodels, sklearn), R, or Excel with Solver can be used depending on the technical capacity of the organization.

3.6 Use Case Flexibility and Adaptability

The model is adaptable to multiple contexts:

- Urban logistics: Model the effect of congestion and tolls on delivery cost per parcel.
- Rural delivery systems: Assess how poor road quality and long distances affect fuel and maintenance costs.
- Cold chain logistics: Extend the model with temperature-sensitive fuel usage or refrigeration costs.
- SMEs and cooperatives: Simplify the model by focusing on a limited subset of high-variance predictors.

It can also be customized for single-vehicle route planning, multi-modal supply chains, or cross-border trade corridors.

3.7 Output Interpretation and Managerial Implications

Once fitted, the model provides:

- Coefficient estimates: Quantify marginal cost effect per unit increase in predictor.
- Significance levels: Indicate confidence in observed relationships.
- Scenario simulations: “What if” analyses to test impact of fuel increases, toll changes, or route upgrades.

Managers can then prioritize cost interventions based on statistical significance and economic magnitude of predictors.

3.8 Summary

The proposed regression-based framework offers a systematic, data-driven approach for modeling and interpreting the multifactorial drivers of transportation cost variability. It is grounded in statistical theory, adaptable to local contexts, and actionable for operational managers. By using a modular and flexible design, the framework bridges the gap between academic rigor and real-world utility.

4. Implementation Considerations

Implementing the proposed regression-based framework in real-world local supply chains requires careful attention to multiple factors spanning data management, organizational readiness, and technical execution. This section elaborates on practical considerations, challenges, and recommendations that organizations should address to maximize the framework's analytical value and operational impact.

4.1 Data Collection and Quality Assurance

A foundational prerequisite for successful implementation is the availability of reliable, comprehensive data. Local supply chains often face significant data challenges including fragmentation, incompleteness, and inconsistent standards.

- Data Sources: Key data should be sourced from transportation management systems (TMS), fleet telematics, fuel consumption logs, delivery manifests, and external data such as weather reports and infrastructure status.
- Data Completeness: Missing or irregular data entries reduce model accuracy. Automated data capture tools (e.g., GPS trackers, IoT sensors) are recommended to ensure real-time data fidelity.
- Standardization: Data normalization including unit standardization, timestamp synchronization, and consistent categorical coding is vital to harmonize inputs.
- Data Validation: Outliers, duplicates, and erroneous entries must be identified through validation routines (e.g., range checks, cross-referencing).

Robust data governance policies are necessary to maintain ongoing data integrity and compliance with data privacy regulations such as GDPR or Nigeria's Data Protection Regulation [70], [71].

4.2 Technical Infrastructure and Tools

Organizations must establish an analytical environment capable of supporting regression modeling and iterative analysis:

- Software Platforms: Common tools include Python (libraries like pandas, stats models, scikit-learn), R, and commercial platforms like SAS or SPSS. For less technically advanced organizations, Excel or Power BI with statistical add-ons may suffice.
- Hardware Requirements: Modern computing resources, including cloud infrastructure, can facilitate faster processing of large datasets and enable collaborative access.
- Integration: The regression framework should interface smoothly with existing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and TMS systems for seamless data flow.
- Scalability: Planning for data growth and model complexity ensures sustainable long-term use.

4.3 Organizational and Human Factors

Analytical frameworks must be embedded within an organization's culture and workflow to be effective.

- Stakeholder Engagement: Early involvement of logistics managers, financial analysts, and IT teams ensures alignment on objectives, data needs, and interpretation of results.
- Capacity Building: Training in regression analysis and data literacy is critical. Upskilling personnel enables self-sufficient model maintenance and refinement.
- Change Management: Emphasizing the framework as a decision-support tool not a performance punitive measure facilitates adoption and trust.
- Cross-Functional Collaboration: Bridging silos between operations, finance, and IT promotes holistic understanding and data sharing.

4.4 Model Validation and Continuous Improvement

Ensuring the robustness and relevance of the regression model is an iterative process.

- Model Diagnostics: Use statistical tests such as R^2, adjusted R^2, F-test, t-tests, and residual analysis to evaluate fit and assumptions.
- Cross-Validation: Employ k-fold or holdout validation to prevent overfitting and confirm generalizability.
- Regular Updates: Periodically recalibrate models with new data to capture evolving cost patterns or changes in operational practices.
- Feedback Loops: Incorporate user feedback to improve variable selection, model complexity, and reporting formats.

4.5 Ethical and Regulatory Compliance

Transportation cost data may contain sensitive commercial information. Ethical and legal considerations include:

- Data Privacy: Compliance with local and international data protection laws is mandatory. Anonymization and access controls reduce risk.
- Transparency: Model assumptions and limitations should be clearly communicated to stakeholders.
- Data Security: Implement cybersecurity protocols to safeguard data from breaches or unauthorized use.

4.6 Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Several challenges may arise during implementation:

- Data Scarcity: Use proxy variables or data augmentation techniques if primary data are unavailable.
- Resource Constraints: Start with pilot projects and scale gradually to manage costs and complexity.
- Resistance to Analytics: Promote success stories and evidence-based benefits to overcome skepticism.

4.7 Summary

Implementing the regression-based framework demands a comprehensive approach encompassing technical readiness, data governance, organizational alignment, and continuous learning. Organizations that invest in these areas will be well-positioned to harness regression analytics for actionable insights into transportation cost variability.

5. Business Impact and Policy Implications

Understanding and managing transportation cost variability is a pivotal concern for businesses operating in local supply chains. The regression-based framework proposed in this paper offers multiple avenues through which firms and policymakers can derive value, optimize logistics performance, and formulate informed interventions. This section discusses the anticipated business impacts and policy relevance, highlighting how data-driven insights can transform supply chain efficiency and cost management.

5.1 Enhancing Cost Transparency and Control

Transportation costs are often opaque and aggregated, obscuring underlying drivers and limiting managerial oversight. By decomposing total costs into measurable components through regression analysis, organizations gain unprecedented visibility into which factors most strongly influence cost variability. This transparency enables:

- Targeted cost reduction initiatives focusing on high-impact drivers (e.g., improving road conditions, optimizing load factors) [101], [102].
- Enhanced budgeting accuracy by incorporating variability into forecasting models [103], [104].
- Improved contract negotiations with carriers and service providers based on empirically identified cost determinants [105], [106].

5.2 Strategic Resource Allocation

The framework empowers logistics managers to allocate resources more effectively by prioritizing investments that yield the greatest cost mitigation benefits. For example, if regression results indicate that poor road quality substantially increases vehicle maintenance costs, investments in infrastructure upgrades or alternate routing strategies can be prioritized. Similarly, identifying the cost impact of driver experience or route optimization software adoption informs workforce development and technology deployment decisions [107].

5.3 Operational Efficiency and Performance Improvement

By quantifying the marginal effects of operational variables, firms can design and monitor performance metrics aligned with cost reduction goals. Regression-derived insights guide improvements such as:

- Adjusting shipment frequencies and consolidations to balance cost and service levels.
- Optimizing delivery schedules to minimize congestion-related delays.
- Implementing driver training programs that directly address identified cost drivers [108].

5.4 Policy Formulation and Infrastructure Planning

At the policy level, the framework provides a rigorous basis for prioritizing infrastructure investments and regulatory reforms. Policymakers can use regression results to:

- Identify critical road segments whose improvement would yield the highest reduction in transportation costs.
- Design toll and fee structures that reflect actual cost drivers without unduly burdening local businesses.
- Formulate regulations that streamline border crossings, reduce corruption-induced costs, and enhance transparency [109], [110].

5.5 Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Local SMEs often lack sophisticated logistics analytics capabilities and face disproportionate cost variability risks. The framework can be adapted into simplified tools or decision-support dashboards that democratize access to cost driver insights. This empowers SMEs to make informed routing, scheduling, and contracting decisions, improving their competitive positioning [111].

5.6 Enabling Sustainable Supply Chain Practices

Reducing transportation cost variability often aligns with sustainability goals. For instance, route optimization to avoid congestion not only cuts costs but also lowers greenhouse gas emissions. The framework's ability to highlight inefficiencies supports green logistics initiatives and corporate social responsibility commitments [112], [113].

5.7 Challenges and Limitations in Business and Policy Application

While the framework offers robust analytical capabilities, its application must consider:

- Data availability and quality limitations, particularly in informal or fragmented supply chains.
- The need for continuous data updating to reflect evolving market and infrastructure conditions.
- Organizational willingness to integrate analytics into decision-making processes [80].

5.8 Summary

The regression-based framework presents significant potential to transform transportation cost management from intuition-driven to evidence-based practice. By bridging operational insights with strategic planning and policy development, it fosters more resilient, efficient, and sustainable local supply chains.

6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This paper has proposed a comprehensive regression-based framework designed to identify and analyze the multifaceted drivers of transportation cost variability in local supply chains. Through an extensive review of academic literature, industry reports, and applied modeling studies, we established the critical need for systematic, data-driven approaches to unravel the complex cost structures inherent in transportation logistics.

The framework integrates key variables spanning infrastructure conditions, operational practices, input costs, regulatory environments, and technological adoption, providing a modular and adaptable model suitable for diverse local contexts. By leveraging regression analysis, the framework offers quantitative insights into the relative significance and interaction effects of these cost drivers, thereby empowering managers and policymakers to prioritize interventions based on empirical evidence. Implementing this framework can substantially enhance transparency, cost control, operational efficiency, and policy formulation in supply chains that are often characterized by volatility and resource constraints. Importantly, the approach supports sustainable logistics management by identifying inefficiencies that contribute both to financial losses and environmental externalities.

Despite these contributions, several avenues for future research and development remain. First, empirical validation of the framework using large-scale datasets from varied geographic and economic contexts is essential to confirm its predictive accuracy and practical applicability. Second, incorporating advanced regression techniques such as generalized additive models (GAM), ridge regression, or machine learning-based regressors may improve modeling of nonlinearities and high-dimensional interactions. Third, integrating real-time data streams through IoT and telematics could enable dynamic cost variability forecasting, moving beyond static retrospective analysis. Further studies should also explore the human and organizational dimensions of adopting regression-based cost analytics, including barriers to data sharing, capacity building needs, and change

management strategies. Finally, expanding the framework to encompass environmental and social cost drivers will align it with the growing emphasis on sustainable and ethical supply chain practices.
In conclusion, the regression-based framework presented herein offers a vital tool for demystifying transportation cost variability in local supply chains. Its adoption promises to advance the rigor and relevance of logistics cost management, fostering more resilient, efficient, and transparent supply networks.

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